

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 143296

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, SHUM, EFIN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR JOHANES' CALL ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
VEST

1. CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR JOHANNES, AT HIS REQUEST,
CALLED ON EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST ON JUNE 5 FOR
DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BEFORE LEAVING JUNE 12
FOR TWO WEEKS' LEAVE AND CONSULTATIONS IN PRAGUE.
EUR/EE DIRECTOR AND CZECHOSLOVAK DESK OFFICER ALSO
PRESENT. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION FOLLOWS:

2. NATO MEETING. VEST INFORMED JOHANNES OF RESULTS OF
RECENT NATO MEETING IN WASHINGTON. VEST EMPHASIZED
NATO ALLIES' COMMON PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT IN DEFENSE
AREA. REFERRING JOHANNES TO ARTICLE ON NATO PREPARED-
NESS IN SUNDAY, JUNE, 4 WASHINGTON POST'S OUTLOOK SECTION
(WE ARE POUCHING EMBASSY A COPY). HE STRESSED THAT NATO
MUST ACT TO COUNTER INCREASED WARSAW PACT CAPABILITIES,
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I.E., THE SOVIET MILITARY BUILD-UP. NATO DOES NOT
EXPECT AN ATTACK BY THE EAST BUT MUST BE PREPARED TO
DEAL WITH THE EAST'S CAPABILITIES. IT IS IN THIS
CONTEXT THAT THE NATO LONG-RANGE DEFENSE PROGRAM WAS
ADOPTED BY THE NAC. VEST GAVE JOHANNES A COPY OF THE
PUBLIC DOCUMENT PREPARED BY NATO ON THE RECENTLY

COMPLETED EAST/WEST STUDY.

3. IN POLITICAL AREA, VEST MENTIONED NATO PARTICIPANTS' EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF AFRICAN SITUATION. VEST SAID US POLICY IS TO LET AFRICANS GOVERN THEMSELVES.

4. BILATERAL RELATIONS. JOHANES MENTIONED HIS IMMINENT DEPARTURE FOR PRAGUE AND ASKED VEST FOR HIS COMMENTS ON RELATIONS. IN A NUTSHELL, VEST SAID, RELATIONS UNFORTUNATELY HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON SUCH ISSUES AS DIVIDED FAMILIES AND DISSIDENTS. THESE DIFFERENCES, IN TURN, CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE HERE WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. ANDREWS MENTIONED 30 OUTSTANDING DIVIDED FAMILIES CASES AND GOC'S DENIAL OF VISAS TO JOURNALISTS AND AMERICANS WHO IN PAST HAD HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN VISITING CZECHOSLOVAKIA. VEST OBSERVED THAT SUCH CASES LEAVE A BAD IMPRESSION AMONG THE PUBLIC AND IN CONGRESS AND INEVITABLY AFFECT RELATIONS. ANDREWS SAID THAT MANY PERSONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION ARE UNWILLING TO RUN THE RISK OF TAKING POSITIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. JOHANES SAID DISSIDENT'S ACTIONS AND THE GOC REACTION PROVE THAT GOC IS NOT USING "POLITICAL" MEANS TO RESTRAIN THEM ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SOMETIMES DETAINED. HE CONTRASTED GOC WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS TO THE US DEMAND FOR A QUID PRO QUO. HE CITED HELSINKI AGREEMENT AS REQUIRE-
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ING THAT SIGNATORIES TRY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS; SUCH ATTEMPTS ARE NOT GIFTS FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER. DEMANDING THAT THE GOC TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS VIOLATES CZECHOSLOVAK INDEPENDENCE. VEST REPLIED THAT ACTIONS CAUSE REACTIONS. OUR ACTIONS DEPEND ON CZECHOSLOVAK RESPONSIVENESS. HE STRESSED THAT OUR RECENT DECISION TO DELAY SIGNING THE CULTURAL EXCHANGES AGREEMENT IS NOT RELATED TO THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION AS JOHANES ALLEGED, AND THAT THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE RELATIONSHIP DETERMINES WHAT CAN REALISTICALLY BE DONE. THE GOC'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD HAS CREATED THE ATMOSPHERE SOURING RELATIONS.

5. CLAIMS/GOLD. JOHANES REFERRED TO CLAIMS/GOLD ISSUE, NOTING THAT THE UK AND FRANCE HAD LONG AGO AGREED TO DELIVER GOLD TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOC DISLIKES THE USG'S REFUSAL TO RELEASE IT, WHICH CONTRAVENES THE PROVISIONS BOTH OF BASKET I (ENDING WORLD WAR II) AND BASKET II (EXTENSION OF MFN). JOHANES MENTIONED GOC'S SECOND THOUGHTS ON HOLDING SEPTEMBER SESSION OF US-CZECHOSLOVAK ECONOMIC COUNCIL GIVEN LACK OF PROGRESS IN IMPROVING BUSINESS RELATIONS. ACTION TO

RESOLVE CLAIMS/GOLD MUST COME FROM THE US SIDE. VEST SAID THAT, EVEN IF WE HAD AN AGREED PROPOSAL READY TO PRESENT, WE WOULD NOT NOW DO SO DUE TO THE STATE OF RELATIONS.

6. US/SOVIET RELATIONS. JOHANES ASKED VEST BRIEFLY TO OUTLINE THE STATE OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS. VEST SAID THEY ARE TROUBLED DUE TO THE ORLOV TRIAL AND THE SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. WE ARE NOT IN ANOTHER COLD WAR, BUT THE PUBLIC AND THE CONGRESS ARE DISTURBED. VEST REFERRED JOHANES TO THE PRESIDENT'S FORTHCOMING ANNAPOLIS SPEECH AND ASKED THAT HE JUDGE IT BY ITSELF RATHER THAN BY WHAT APPEARS IN THE PRESS AND ON TELEVISION. VANCE
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